

NEWS

United States Department of Justice
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Dec. 6, 2006

Former Officer of 100 Black Men of New Jersey
Admits Defrauding Charity of More Than \$156,000

(More)

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NEWARK – A former officer of the non-profit charity “100 Black Men of New Jersey” pleaded guilty today, admitting that he defrauded the organization of more than \$156,000 during his tenure as executive vice-president, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie announced.

Keith DaCosta, 44, of Newark, admitted that he improperly used the name and credit of the 100 Black Men of New Jersey (100BMNJ) and affiliated organizations to lease and otherwise obtain property for personal ventures, and took money from the bank accounts of 100BMNJ and other affiliated entities for his personal benefit. As set forth in an Indictment against DaCosta, the conduct occurred between March 2001 and February 2004, while DaCosta served as executive vice-president of 100BMNJ, an unpaid, volunteer position.

DaCosta pleaded guilty to one count of wire fraud before U.S. District Judge William H. Walls, who scheduled sentencing for March 27. Under DaCosta’s plea agreement and the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, he faces a probable sentencing range of between 21 and 27 months in federal prison. Judge Walls, however, has wide discretion in imposing sentence, and can sentence within, above or below that range. There is no parole in the federal system.

The 100BMNJ is a non-profit, charitable organization operating in New Jersey. The mission of the social services organization is to improve the quality of life and enhance the educational opportunities for African-Americans. The organization is funded by various grants, memberships, and fund-raisers. 100BMNJ is a chapter of a national organization known as the 100 Black Men of America, Inc. The national chapter has regional affiliates throughout the United States, including a chapter in Atlanta known as the 100 Black Men of Atlanta, Inc.

DaCosta admitted today that he improperly entered into leases binding the 100BMNJ and 100 Black Men of Atlanta, Inc., causing those organizations to incur liabilities. DaCosta admitted that he entered into the leases to obtain office equipment and rebate checks for the benefit of DaCosta and his personal, for-profit, home health services company, No Barriers Home HealthCare Services, Inc., in New Jersey.

DaCosta also admitted that he used two bank accounts affiliated with the 100BMNJ’s prostate cancer awareness initiatives for personal expenses including hotel stays, meals, dry cleaning, a \$275 pair of Pelle shoes purchased at The Mall at Short Hills, a \$374 fedora and pocket money.

DaCosta acknowledged that, as a result of his fraudulent activity involving the three leases and two bank accounts, he defrauded the 100BMNJ and affiliated organizations of more than \$156,000.

Christie credited Special Agents of the FBI Newark Division, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Leslie G. Wiser, Jr., for developing the case against DaCosta.

The Government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Judith H. Germano and Marc Larkins of the U.S. Attorney's Office in Newark.

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Defense Attorney: Richard M. Roberts, Esq., West Caldwell